

# The Semaphore

A PUBLICATION OF TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS



## Speedy's: The Heart of a Neighborhood

ISSUE 155

SPRING 2001

# TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

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**Cover:** Owners Marshall and Art Dong in front of Speedy's

*The Semaphore* is a publication of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers for its members. Articles, except for the summary of Board of Directors' Motions, do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Association or its Officers, but are the opinions of the writers of the individual signed articles. The Association can take no responsibility for their content. This membership publication is not to be reprinted or disseminated without written permission.



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# From the Editor's Desk

On a recent Saturday, I ran into three of the people I needed to call during a shopping trip to Speedy's.

Speedy's is like that—the kind of place where you connect with neighbors and make new friends along the way.

We residents of the southeastern slope of Telegraph Hill go there for kibitzing and gossip and friendship. We gathered at Speedy's after the 1989 earthquake, and we make it our first stop after being out of town. We need the sense of community and of having a base in an increasingly impersonal world that Art and Marshall provide.

They are like family, signing for our packages when we are gone, letting us pay later when we forget our money, knowing what we love. In the days when I went to India (before Crackers), Marshall always managed to get figs before I left. The first figs are outrageously expensive, and maybe Businessman Marshall would have been better off to wait a while, but Friend Marshall always came through because he knew how I loved that fruit.

It is with great pleasure that we dedicate this issue of *The Semaphore* to Speedy's. Joe Luttrell has written a long and loving piece about Art and Marshall. Even though I have known the brothers for 25 years, I learned new things about them by reading it.

We fans have enjoyed putting together this Speedy's edition. We hope you will enjoy sharing our memories as well.

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# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

By Joe Luttrell

**W**e have not lost a President, we have gained a Supervisor."

Such is the mantra I find myself repeating ever since December 12th, the day Aaron Peskin was elected District 3 Supervisor. The Hill Dwellers stayed out of that race, as our own governing documents and the Internal Revenue Service provide. But many of us personally rang doorbells, phone-banked, and otherwise ruined our holiday season, to help Aaron gain office. It was a remarkable grass-roots effort.

It seems the City Attorney's office has informally advised Aaron that his continuing as Hill Dwellers' President conflicts with being a Supervisor. So Aaron is taking off one hat and donning another.

For THD, this is almost all good news (see mantra above). Already I have seen consequences. In a hard-fought, six-year long neighborhood development battle, the project sponsors' lawyer has just told us "you hold all the cards"; they have now agreed to our proposal. The Planning Department, which had formerly found the phone-store sign put up in North Beach without a permit "no problem," now determines it not to be in compliance with the Planning Code.

So we have a potential sea-change here. For the first time in many years, we have a Supervisor who shares our neighborhood concerns and policies. Indeed, insofar as the Hill Dwellers are concerned, we now have a Supervisor who was largely responsible for formulating and affecting those policies over the last several years.

There has never been, so far as I know, a

THD President before Aaron who has made the jump to Supervisor. It is a tribute to Aaron's resourcefulness, talent, and grit that he pulled it off. For the Hill Dwellers, the opportunity is unprecedented. If you have ever thought of becoming involved in THD, there has never been a better time. Please contact me with your ideas, your concerns, your thoughts, whatever you wish to convey. Or contact any of the directors and committee chairs whose names and telephone numbers you'll find (along with mine) on the inside front cover.

And if you want to reach Aaron directly, he is in Room 256 of City Hall, 554-7450 (the FAX is 554-7454), e-mail [Aaron\\_Peskin@ci.sf.ca.us](mailto:Aaron_Peskin@ci.sf.ca.us). Aaron, thanks for some great years, past and future!

## ***sem.a.phone***

***Definition:*** To convey information using visual signals, such as flags, lights and mechanical arms.

In the last century Telegraph Hill was a lookout spot. A man stood at the top and watched for ships arriving through the Golden Gate. He used semaphore signals to spell out ships' names to the people below who were waiting for goods and mail. Neighbors who formed Telegraph Hill Dwellers in 1954 named their newsletter to salute this early use of the Hill.

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# PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE REPORT

By Nancy Shanahan

## I. TELEGRAPH HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

*(This historic district on the east side of Telegraph Hill was established in 1986 to preserve the largest group of pre-1870 structures in the City.)*

**Grace Marchant Garden/20 Alta Street Development.** Negotiations are proceeding on the terms of a conservation easement to be donated by the owner/developer to the Trust for Northeast San Francisco, a newly formed tax-exempt, nonprofit public benefit corporation. The conservation easement will limit in perpetuity the size and nature of all future development on the site and will protect the Grace Marchant Garden for the public's continued enjoyment.

**290 Union Street.** Neighbors adjacent to this project and THD have been working with the City's Planning and Building Departments to bring this project into conformance with the plans approved by the Landmarks Board and Planning Commission. Such plans (from which the developer has deviated) were agreed upon by the developer after extensive negotiations with THD and nearby neighbors in exchange for neighborhood support for the project.

## II. NORTH BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

*(In 1987, the North Beach Neighborhood Commercial District Ordinance was adopted to maintain the character of and mix of businesses in North Beach.)*

**1438 Grant Avenue (Savoy Tivoli).** A large number of protests have been filed with the State Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) against the issuance of a new liquor license for the Savoy Tivoli. Protestants' objections are based primarily on excessive noise levels and other disturbances to the surrounding neighborhood residents from this open-air patio bar and pool hall that has no walls or physical barriers between the "interior" and the street. Numerous complaints lodged over the past several years with the police and various City agencies have resulted in no relief.

**1351 Grant Avenue (formerly Figoni's Hardware).** ABC has not yet issued a liquor license for a proposed new bar/restaurant at this site. Protests filed with the ABC objected primarily to the noise and disruption that would result from the proposed conversion of the old Figoni Hardware storefront into an open-air patio bar (a la the Savoy Tivoli) along the same block face as the Grant & Green Bar, the Lost and Found Saloon, and La Bodega.

**1371 Grant Avenue (Grant & Green Bar).** New ownership for the Grant & Green Bar at the corner of Grant Ave. and Green St. which will reopen soon following interior renovations.

**504 Columbus Avenue (Pacific Bell PCS Store).** The Planning Department determined on December 19th that Pac Bell's signs (installed without permits) are in violation of the Planning Code. Since that date, Pac Bell has done nothing to address the violation. THD's written correspondence to Pac

*continued next page*

## PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE REPORT *continued*

Bell regarding more acceptable signage has gone unanswered.

### **431 Columbus Avenue (DJ's Restaurant).**

The Planning Department issued a Notice of Violation to the owners of this new restaurant in mid-December citing the illegal signage installed without permits. Although the restaurant has turned off the illegal flashing lights, nothing else has been done to cure the violations.

**1717 Powell St.** The Planning Commission approved the application of Leirum Corp. to use the first floor of this building (that is adjacent to the theater, to be reopened by Leirum as Muriel's Theater) for a combination retail/small self-service restaurant/business use. At THD's request, conditions were placed on this approval requiring that (1) the business/professional use be restricted to the rear 2,000 square feet of the ground floor and not in any instance be allowed to expand beyond 2,000 square feet of floor area without a new conditional use authorization; (2) the retail and restaurant uses will occupy the front portion of the ground floor facing onto Powell Street (approximately 1,700 square feet), thereby promoting an active pedestrian street front; and (3) the approval will expire with the term of Leirum's lease of the space.

**801 Greenwich Street.** A permit was issued on January 21st for this project to demolish the existing one-story grocery store building at the corner of Greenwich and Mason and construct in its place a 40-foot high structure (plus roof-top features) with 8 residential condominiums and 750 square feet of commercial space. The P & Z Committee recommended that the rooftop structures be eliminated to keep the building within 40

feet, that the proposed commercial space be increased to 2000 square feet to maintain an active retail space, and that such commercial space front on Greenwich (instead of Mason, as proposed) to enhance its commercial viability and maintain a lively street front. These recommendations were not incorporated.

## III. PROJECTS ON THE NORTHEAST WATERFRONT

**Piers 27-29.** Two competing proposals being considered by the Port Commission for the development of a major sports and recreation complex at these piers were presented to THD's Board. A proposal by Chelsea Piers of New York would reuse most of the existing space as a sports/recreation facility in conjunction with the Bay Club, include retail space, and would introduce parking on the piers in the open area between Piers 27 and 29. Mills Corporation proposes to remove all of Pier 27 (not historic) to open up views of the bay, to partner with the YMCA for its sports/recreation facility, and to include a significant amount of office space. Although THD's Board has not yet taken a position, members expressed concerns regarding Chelsea's proposed parking on the piers and Mills' inclusion of a large amount of office space, and that public open-space components of each project be prioritized and completed simultaneous with the development, rather than being left for future public funding. THD plans to sponsor a community presentation of these projects.

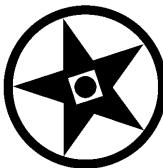
**Pier 45, Shed A.** Even after the voters' overwhelming message to the Port Commission

## PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE REPORT *continued*

(by the November 7<sup>th</sup> ballot measure) to reject Cleveland's Malrite Company proposed theme park ("San Francisco at the Wharf"), the Port Commission extended its negotiations with Malrite. The alternative project supported by the voters is a bay-oriented education center ("The Bay Center") proposed by a coalition of wharf businesses, environmental groups and the State Coastal Conservancy.

**Affordable Housing Project (at Broadway and Battery).** Board Member Brendan Kelly is representing THD at a series of public meetings to provide our input into the design, massing, height, materials and relationship to the historic district of this proposal to be located at the base of Telegraph Hill in the NE Waterfront Historic District.

**Proposed Hotel Project (at the Embarcadero and Broadway).** Representatives of the Port's chosen developer, Stanford Hotel, made a presentation at THD's January Board meeting of its proposed design for a hotel at The Embarcadero and Broadway within the NE Waterfront Historic District. In addition to questioning the appropriateness of hotel use at this site, the Board expressed serious concerns with the proposal's height, size, massing, materials, relationship to the historic district and Telegraph Hill, and overall design. In addition, there were concerns with the project's potential traffic impacts and objections to a proposed bridge over Davis St. The developer was encouraged to share the design with the community.



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## PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE REPORT *continued*

### IV. JACKSON SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT

*(Established in 1972, this is the City's first historic district. The district is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.)*

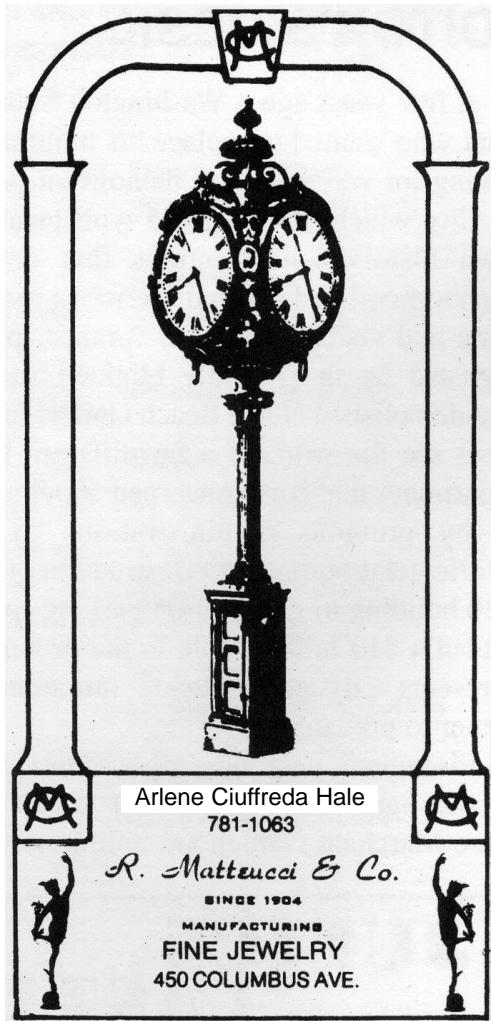
**722-724 and 726-728 Montgomery Street (Belli Building).** We understand that the City Attorney has threatened to bring suit against owner and Landmarks Board Member Nancy Ho-Belli because after three years, the roof is still open, rain continues to pour in, and these two 1850s Landmark buildings (City Landmarks No. 9 and 10) continue to be demolished by what appears to be willful neglect. THD has and will continue to express its concern. **Please help by calling Neil Hart, the Landmarks Board planner, at 558-6338, to urge him to take all action necessary to protect these landmarks.**

### V. MISC. PROJECTS

**North Beach Public Housing Development (bounded by Columbus, Bay, Mason and Francisco).** This joint project of HUD, SF Housing Authority and BRIDGE Housing Corp. to demolish the existing structures and replace them with 360 townhouses is now proceeding through required federal review process.

**373 Broadway Street.** AT&T is proposing to install 12 antennas and a base transceiver station on the roof of this historic building in Jackson Square as a part of its wireless cellular network. Each antenna would measure 47.3 inches high by 25.2 inches wide.

Because this building has been identified as historic in the North Beach Historic Survey, the project requires environmental review before it can be sent to the Planning Commission for approval.



# Remembering Mama

By Jan Holloway

No one who lives anywhere near North Beach can fail to miss the breakfast and lunch lines patiently awaiting tables in the sunny corner restaurant located at Stockton and Filbert. *Semaphore* readers have stood in those lines on many a weekend morning waiting for those unforgettable breakfasts, brunches, and lunches. How many of you, especially newcomers to North Beach, know much about Mama, the restaurant's originator with the wonderful personality, and the culinary history beginning in that yellow-awninged building?

Yes, there was a real "Mama," and we pay tribute to her memory only because she passed away last August after nearly fifty years of serving food, song, and loving cheer to North Beach residents and celebrities.

She was born Frances Muriel Lent in San Francisco in 1926 and graduated from Galileo High School. At 18, she was singing in Broadway cabarets and nightclubs, where she met her future husband Michael Sanchez.

In the early 1950s, escaping from the insurance business, the Sanchezes took over a popular ice cream parlor at 1710 Stockton, and by franchising "Herbert's Sherbet" (originally at Fillmore and Lombard), immediately were successful. Before long they added hot dogs, homemade jam, and Frances' irrepressible charm to their menu. Calling it Mama's, they began culinary history.

From the beginning the atmosphere was intimate and cheerful. As their menu repertoire expanded, it always featured fresh ingredients—Mama was a precursor to Alice Waters—and demanded a light touch with the legendary omelets, special fruits, and that extraordinary



Frances Sanchez

cole slaw, garnering a reputation which attracted food luminaries such as James Beard and Julia Child.

Never one to stand still, Mama and Michael began an expansion of locations. By 1970, they had opened satellites on Nob Hill and at Macy's. To the beautifully appointed Nob Hill spot came her regular patrons and visiting celebrities, such as Michael Douglas, Rock Hudson, Luciano Pavarotti, and Paul Newman.

Mama never gave up her singing. She specialized in pre and post WWII pop. In addition to the restaurants, she opened up cabarets in North Beach and downtown.

*continued on page 12*

# Remembering Mama *continued*

All the while this dynamic woman was supervising her food and entertainment empire, she worked tirelessly for local charities like Meals on Wheels and delightedly served on the ACT Board of Directors.

As the years passed, both arms of the business declined. Eventually all closed with the exception of the original, where one of her eight children, Michael, with his wife Debra, still hold forth. Locals know that Mama may be gone but the same charm radiates; Michael still makes the brioche bread and jams and the omelets are fluffy as ever. You walk in, and there are those yellow tablecloths bedecked with fresh flowers while an arrangement of Linda Quintana's fanciful heart paintings remind of the really Big Heart of Mama.

When this wonderful woman died, the Board of Supervisors adjourned its regular meeting of August 21 out of respect to the memory of Frances Muriel Sanchez, heralding her kindness, peaceful nature and generosity that have through the years inspired so many San Franciscans.

To honor a Special Person who truly Made a Difference to their neighborhood, the THD Beautification Committee will award a combination People Who Make A Difference and their Heritage of the Hill Awards to Mama's family at our next dinner meeting.

## from Mama's Journal

*The following story comes from Mama's notebook, in which she jotted some recollections of the early days at the restaurant as well as charming anecdotes about some of the well-known people*

*who came her way. In her notebook Mama wrote, "This warm-hearted story was just one of so many wonderful happenings in our Family restaurant. It was the story I loved most."*

Arthur Fiedler called Mama's one late afternoon and I answered the telephone to hear (in a very gruff sounding voice), "I'm Arthur Fieldler, I hear my musicians have been eating in your restaurant and I am coming by at 5:00 for dinner. Do you have homemade soup?"

Yes.

"Fresh fish?"

I assured him we did, even though I had to run up to Napoli Market to buy the fresh fish!

The staff and I were quite excited to meet the famous conductor, so we all decided to stay to serve him with hopes of meeting and talking. He arrived promptly at 5:00 and as he entered Mama's, we could see he wasn't going to be very open to conversation. To my practiced eye he had a stern, no-nonsense countenance, with little room open to engage in conversation.

He was welcomed and seated at what we considered the best of the 14 tables: table 2 overlooking Washington Square Park and part of Russian Hill. The staff and I were behind our food counter where we could observe him.

As I was preparing his first course, I noticed half way down the block approaching was Pete, a local character and his dog, Trounce, who was in his usual place sitting in a cardboard box with Pete pulling him along with a make-shift handle.

We called Pete "Pete the Bum." He lived on the streets, way before it became a way of life. Where he actually slept, we never inquired. We did our good deed for Pete by saving soup bones for Trounce, and leftovers for Pete. He never

# Remembering Mama *continued*

wore anything other than a beat-up coat and whatever he hid underneath. We would try to apprehend him at the door with a bag but more often than not, Pete came in and liked talking to everyone. I think conversation was as important as the contents of the bag.

Well, back to Arthur Fiedler. After he was seated and served his soup, the staff and I, all 4 of us, behind the counter and I was beginning to prepare fresh petrale for his dinner entree and sneaking peeks at the great man, I saw Pete walking up the street towards Mama's. I told the staff to say a quick prayer that Pete pass the restaurant and not come in with Trounce in the box. What would Arthur Fiedler think? He would probably never come back, thinking Pete was a patron and what kind of a place is this. I really never know who smelled worse, Pete or Trounce. I think it was a toss-up.

Thanks be to God, Pete crossed the street, bouncing Trounce down the curb and then yanking him over the curb (there were not handicap curbs in the late 60s) so Trounce, really got a shakeup.

Pete passed our door, and we all looked at each other, a big smile on our faces, as well as a sigh of relief. As Pete passed our window on Stockton Street, Arthur Fiedler jumped up from his chair, running out of the door and began calling, "Pete, Pete, it's me, Arthur."

Pete turned and walked back and the two men stood on Stockton St. embracing each other, laughing, both talking at the same time, trying to catch up on lost years.

Arthur invited Pete to dinner, which, of course, included Trounce. These old friends shared a meal together, caught up on each other's lives, and parted with an embrace, knowing they would not see each other again.

When they left, my staff and I knew we have learned one of life's beautiful lessons. Each summer when "The Pops" came to S.F. there would be Arthur dining at Mama's. We became good friends and he told me about our "Pete the Bum." He was a native son of Boston, a respected lawyer who lost his career and life to alcohol. Trounce, we never did find out where he came from, but I know he had to be pretty special, by the company he kept.

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# From the Mayor's Liaison to District 3

**G**reetings! My name is Betty Chau, and I am the Mayor's Liaison to District 3, that includes Chinatown, Nob Hill, Russian Hill, Telegraph Hill and the Waterfront. As a member of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services (MONS), I am here to provide services, and present your views and concerns to the Mayor. I have been part of the MONS Team for four years working with the Mayor's correspondence and staffing the Chinatown Neighborhood City Hall.

As your liaison to District 3 and to the Chinese Community, I am available to follow up on anything from an individual request to a neighborhood problem or concern. Along with Central Station Captain Kevin Dillon and other City staff in the area, I work to provide top quality City services. Central Police Station is located 756 Vallejo Street; their phone number is (415) 315-2400. There are also community policing meetings with Captain Dillon and representatives from city departments where you may voice your concerns. If you are interested in getting notice of these meetings, you should notify me, so that I can keep you posted with date, time, and place.

I also staff the Chinatown Neighborhood City Hall twice a week every Monday between 3-5p.m. and every Wednesday between 4-5p.m. at our new location in the Portsmouth Square Recreation Center (lower level at Kearny & Washington). At this location I assist citizens with various problems and issues with the help of non-profit agencies and city departments such as Recreation and Park, Department of Parking and Traffic and Chinatown Community Development Center. We assist constituents with everything from housing to police to city government issues.

I am able to connect my constituents with needed services, guidance and resources. I am a fluent speaker of Cantonese and able to help individuals with language barriers.

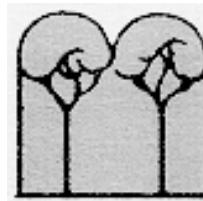
I can also help with scheduling requests, proclamations, greetings, and certificates from the Mayor. I am able to help constituents connect with the appropriate department for their needs. I am here to try and resolve your problem through the department or resolve it myself.

I am located at City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, room 160. I can be reached by phone (415) 554-6253 or by email: [betty\\_chau@ci.sf.ca.us](mailto:betty_chau@ci.sf.ca.us) or you can learn more about MONS by visiting our website at [www.ci.sf.ca.us/mons](http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/mons).

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# North Beach's Latest Italian Wave

By John Doxey

**Y**ou don't have to spend much time strolling Columbus Avenue, or slurping pasta at one of North Beach's more authentic Italian eateries, to hear it. Whether it's the Italian pop blaring from the television at Caffe Italia, a conversation in rapid Italian between waiters and kitchen staff at Ristorante Ideale, or the clowning banter of Italian waiters at The Steps of Rome, it is unmistakably the sound of Italy.

Unlike the Little Italy districts of many American cities, where Italian restaurants and shops are frequently staffed by people who may never have set foot in Italy and where Italian is spoken by an ever-dwindling group of locals, San Francisco's North Beach continues to draw new and mostly young arrivals from Italy.

Although nobody (including the local Italian Consulate General) seems to have any supporting statistics, anecdotal evidence suggests there are now as many—and possibly even more—Italian citizens working in the neighborhood as there have been at any point in recent decades. A number of North Beach venues—including the two Steps of Rome outlets (the cafe and trattoria), Figaro, the two Macaroni outlets (the cafe and Scieu Scieu), Caffe Orsini and Ristorante Ideale - are managed or staffed largely by recently arrived Italians, most of them men in their 20s and 30s.

"Italians like to come to San Francisco because it's more livable than other American cities. It's small enough to walk around, the weather is good, the food is good and it is a beautiful city," says Nico Malvini, a 29-year-old manager at the Steps of Rome. "More Italians

are coming to San Francisco these days because more Italians [have the means to] travel. San Francisco has a good reputation in Italy, so a lot of [young Italians] want to come here and try it out. And once they arrive in San Francisco, many Italians still come to North Beach to look for work and to hang out."

Young Italians like Malvini represent "the latest wave" of Italians to arrive in North Beach, says Daniel Leone, ambassador-at-large for the North Beach Chamber of Commerce. "They help add authenticity and Italian flavor to the neighborhood, and their Italian accents are certainly good for business." Leone described the businesses staffed primarily by young Italians as "a nice complement" to those in the neighborhood that have been around for many years and which are run by older-generation Italians or Italian-Americans.

However, seasoned neighborhood observers like Leone point to differences between these and the Italians who settled in North Beach and gave it an Italian identity during the first half of the 20th Century. Unlike previous generations, "not many in [the new wave] are immigrants," says Leone.

"Unlike before, when Italians were poor and they arrived on a one-way ticket, most of these young Italians are coming to San Francisco in search of an adventure and they have a two-way ticket. They come here now because they want to, not because they feel they have to. A few will end up staying here, but most will return home."

"Very few of them plan to stay here," agrees Giuseppe Strongone, the 35-year-old owner of Caffe Italia, who came to the Bay Area 16 years ago and put down roots. "They come on a four-

## North Beach's Latest Wave *continued*

month visa and they get a job in a cafe or bar to make a few dollars and then they go back home or they move on to another city like Miami where they can find more action and night life. They're kind of a spoiled generation. Most of them find that life [in America] requires too much hard work and long hours."

Also unlike previous generations, many of the young Italians now coming to San Francisco choose to live in other, more affordable parts of the city.

"It's not like it was in the old days, when people who worked in North Beach also lived in the neighborhood," says Leone. Malvini helps explain why: "I like it here in North Beach because it feels more like Italy. But affordability is a problem, thanks to all that dot-com money floating around. I used to live around here, but I moved to the Mission District for a lower rent."

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# Shopping in the Hood

By Sue Gilbert

When I moved to Telegraph Hill in July of 1999, I began to explore the City on foot, starting in my new neighborhood. As I passed all the little shops on Grant between Broadway and Filbert, I could not help but wonder, "Who buys the merchandise in these stores? How on earth do the proprietors make a living - surely our neighborhood cannot support so many lovely (but sometimes expensive!) stores." Yet, many have been located here for years, and some new ones are added occasionally, an indication that Telegraph Hill is a ripe retail market. I decided to tour some of these shops.

What I learned is that the shops in our neighborhood are unique. Their clientele seek them out from all over the Bay Area as well as the world beyond.

The wares from many women's apparel and shoe stores beckon from plate glass windows, and some of these bring a hint of Paris to Grant Avenue. At **Insolent**, a shop featuring European brands of footwear, one is greeted by a charming young Frenchwoman. In addition to shoes, Insolent also sells mostly imported and original purses and jewelry. The shop prides itself on having something for everybody.

Between Union and Filbert Streets, there is **Lillith** which features stylish, whimsical, and unique clothing for women in the 40-plus age group who want to be creative in their dress; their designs can only be found at their retail store in our neighborhood and in Paris on the left bank. **Babette**, our most recent addition in the category of women's ready to wear apparel,

## Is this your last Semaphore?

If the mailing label is dated March 1, 2001 or earlier, your membership has lapsed and we hope you'll rectify that situation with a check. If you think our records are incorrect or you are in doubt about your membership status, please contact Membership Chair, Rozell Overmire, phone 989-3945. E-mail [rozell@overmire.com](mailto:rozell@overmire.com).

has been recognized by the neighborhood association for a store design in keeping with the history of the area. Babette carries apparel which is also unusual and is made for their label. **Donna** and **MAC** are boutiques which carry up-to-date fashion. Each of these stores estimate that up to 40 percent of their business comes from tourists wandering by, and the balance of sales come from Bay Area folks who make special trips to shop at these stores. And for something lacy to go under these fashions, one can go to **Alla Prima** for high-end and fashionable underwear.

**AbFits** is located between Union and Filbert. Although its original purpose was to carry jeans to fit everyone, it has now added other sportswear items and jewelry. The store personnel describe themselves as devoted to customer service in an old fashioned way. They are the only US outlet for some of the lines of

## Shopping *continued*

apparel which they carry.

Located near AbFits is **Columbine**, whose store windows features floral displays and taxidermy. The creative displays inside the store are reminiscent of some Victorian scenes where stuffed animals mix with live flower and plant arrangements; the website ([www.columbinedesign.com](http://www.columbinedesign.com)) describes the displays as "natural history," a style used in decor since 16th century Europe. Columbine also offers creative floral arrangements.

Reflecting the culture of San Francisco, we have shops with an Asian influence. **Asia Galleries** carries art and antiques imported from 15 Asian countries, including China, Thailand, Nepal and Burma. Rhett Mundy, the proprietor, began his importing career in Boston over 16 years ago, and sells to customers all over the world, including to museums. This shop does not rely on the neighborhood traffic for its business, but we are certainly welcome there. **The Enchanted House** also sells a variety of Asian antiques, modern day *objets d'art* and jewelry.

And for a little bit of everything, we have **Toko Arts**, which sells furniture, home accessories and jewelry mostly handmade by local

## Letters to the Editor

**Editor:** Should the THD regard as their role the entering in on disputes between owners /landlords and residential renters?

*Richard Hanlin*

The Semaphore *welcomes your comments regarding this letter and other issues. Send letters to cheryl@slip.net, or mail letters to Cheryl Bentley, 218 Union, 94133.*

artisans. I for one did a lot of my Christmas shopping there. **Aria**, located across the street from Columbine, describes itself as selling "funk and junk": many antique and some just old or used things that are unusual. These are both destination shops, drawing people from all over the Bay Area, and some tourists as well.

A shop where I have often gone for the accouterments of daily living is our local hardware store, **Tower Hardware** at the corner of Vallejo. The shop has been serving the neighborhood at this location for 20 years and shoppers come from our district as well as Chinatown, Russian Hill and the Marina. This is a locally supported shop with a small amount of tourist trade.

Other shops supported by local residents almost exclusively include the several small grocery stores along Grant Ave. Some feature fresh produce, natural foods and vitamins. We also have a few small groceries off Grant (such as **Speedy's** at the top of Union Street and **Fog Hill** on Kearny). Those of us who live at the top of Telegraph Hill are certainly grateful to them for saving us trips down and back up the hill when we run out of food.

## Bulletin Board

*Want to start a book club? Find a neighbor who shares a special interest? We invite you to use our Bulletin Board for any non-commercial neighborhood messages.*

*The Semaphore* needs a few good men and women to do small line drawings on neighborhood subjects for space fillers. Please call 392-4081 or e-mail [cheryl@slip.net](mailto:cheryl@slip.net).

# Marion Place—Park or Parking

By E Joseph Butler

**W**ith sweeping views of the Bay, a 50-year-old blackwood acacia planted by the grandfather of former Board of Supervisors President John Molinari, and landscaping lovingly provided by neighbors, Marion Place is a special place.

But this 17.5-wide lane on Union near Taylor, currently used as a respite from the bustle, a footpath for pedestrians, and an entrance for two of the three buildings bordering it, is threatened by a proposal to pave it as a driveway for the third structure on the lane.

In January the Board of THD unanimously backed the Russian Hill Neighbors in supporting the preservation of Marion Place.

The Planning Commission will conduct a

hearing on the driveway proposal. Preservations are encouraged by the City's policy of retaining mature street trees, prohibiting driveways on streets such as Union, on which public transit is encouraged, maintaining public right of ways as open space, and defining Marion Place's neighborhood as a "high needs" area for open space.

Stroll up Union Street, see Marion Place and its landmark acacia, and join with more than 1000 San Franciscans who have signed a petition urging both the lane's preservation and improvement of features benefiting pedestrians. The petition is there under the informal park sign, "Molinari-Mana Park," for Judge Mana, who lives adjacent and gardens the lane, and Justice Molinari, whose father planted the tree.

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# Myrick Book To Be Reprinted

By Larry Habegger

The *SF Chronicle* story about THD's bringing David Myrick's book about Telegraph Hill back into print generated dozens of requests for the book and prompted us to take orders at the holiday party at Julius Castle. Progress on the revision is moving along smoothly, if a little slower than would be ideal.

Barring unforeseen obstacles (there are \*always\* unforeseen obstacles in publishing) the book should be in our possession by May, and orders filled shortly after. Reserve your copy now. Remember, the book is the definitive history of Telegraph Hill, has been out of print for years, and will be reissued with 32 new pages and an additional 50 photographs.

To order *San Francisco's Telegraph Hill* 2nd edition

\_\_\_\_ number of copies at \$37.84 per copy (NOTE: The price will be \$27.07 for the first 400 copies ordered, and we haven't received 400 prepaid orders yet!) The above prices include Calif. sales tax.

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We anticipate that copies of *San Francisco's Telegraph Hill* will be shipped in May, 2001. If you have any questions, please write Telegraph Hill Dwellers or call (415) 255-6799.

# Hangin' Out with the Big Dudes

If you watch carefully, as our flock of conures cascades through the sky, you are likely to see a tiny flash of white amongst them. It's Theo, a mighty mite of a budgie, who has been flying with the flock for several months now.

According to Mark Bittner, it's not all that uncommon to see budgies with the conures. But

it's a hard world out there, and the little fellows usually last for a few weeks at the most. Little Theo's endurance has both thrilled and touched flock watchers.

You can check out the latest Theo sightings at [www.wildparrots.com](http://www.wildparrots.com), where Theo now has his own page.

# Greenbelt Alliance Does San Francisco

By Janet Byron

**O**n a glorious fall morning, 40 intrepid Greenbelt Alliance outing-sters set out from the Embarcadero, ventured up and over Telegraph Hill, then scaled Russian Hill and descended to Fisherman's Wharf, all the while exploring San Francisco's lovely and (partially) hidden stairways, parks and lanes.

Accompanying us on the Nov. 18, 2000, journey were Telegraph Hill residents Joe Butler and Julie Christensen of the Pioneer Park Project and dozens of residents helping refurbish the green space around Coit Tower.

The seven-mile San Francisco Stairways walk was part of Greenbelt Alliance's outings series, which takes Bay Area residents into the greenbelt of parks, farms, and other special features of the nine counties that touch San Francisco Bay.

For more than 40 years, Greenbelt Alliance

has been the Bay Area's leading land conservation organization. In order to prevent insidious sprawl, Greenbelt Alliance works on a variety of fronts (grassroots, political, legislative, educational) to protect our resources and raise awareness of greenbelt issues.

In recent years, Greenbelt Alliance has realized that it is not enough to be "against" sprawl; we must be proactive and support smarter urban planning, in order to promote cities that people want to live in, not flee. To that end, we have been working hard to promote more livable communities in already-urbanized areas. This includes supporting compact infill (higher density) development on underutilized urban sites, public transportation, and the variety of amenities that make cities special, such as parks, gardens, creeks and stairways.

This brings us back to San Francisco's Telegraph and Russian Hills. Greenbelt Alliance



Smiles for open space

## Greenbelt *continued*

chose to host an outing here because these neighborhoods provide so many uplifting examples of the ways that communities rally together to improve the collective quality-of-life.

Parts of the tour, led by Greenbelt Alliance volunteer Janet Byron and board member Bob Johnson, started at Embarcadero BART and visited Levi's Plaza and San Francisco Farmer's Market. We then climbed hundreds of steps to Coit Tower and Pioneer Park, where we marveled at the community-driven mega-restoration that is underway.

Joe and Julie took us to Jack Early Park via a little-known public trail on the park's western edge, and showed us lovely community gardens. You can see from our smiling faces how much we enjoyed this "pocket" park! We traversed a number of exceedingly charming avenues including Macondray Lane, Havens Street Steps and curvy Lombard Street, all the while edified and entertained by Joe and Julie's "tales of the city" and Bob's architectural highlights. We were surprised and delighted, in the Vallejo Crest Historic District, to be invited—all 40 of us—into a neighbor's historic home, with its warm redwood walls and astonishing views. Finally, we took the new historic street-car line back downtown.

It was a wonderful day, and Greenbelt Alliance was extremely grateful for the guidance and goodwill of friends in the Pioneer Park Project. The neighborhood's famous parrots even flew over Telegraph Hill in formation. How did you

guys get them to do that?

Greenbelt Alliance outings are offered virtually every weekend of the year, and are free. Reservations are required. For more information, go to [www.greenbelt.org](http://www.greenbelt.org) or call 415-255-3233.

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# Speedy's Redux

By Joe Luttrell

**M**D RR" says the vanity plate of the Rolls Royce parked outside Speedy's Grocery. A wealthy doctor shopping? No, that's the Rolls of Marshall Dong. Next to it, another Rolls; its vanity plate says "RTS TOI", i.e., "Art's Toy", the Rolls of Art Dong.

These two brothers have been, for over thirty years, the heart and soul of the top of Telegraph Hill, dispensing groceries and much else from Speedy's, their store at the corner of Union and Montgomery. How did this all come about?

We begin with Art and Marshall's paternal grandfather, who came to this country to work

on building the railroads. His son, Wai Park Dong, was, in the tradition of the day, married by arrangement to Ngan Ping Wong; neither had ever set eye on the other. For many years, husband and wife continued to live apart, Wai Park in this country and Ngan Ping in China and later in Hong Kong. Altogether, there were six children, two born in China, two in Hong Kong, and two in San Francisco.

The fourth was Art, born in Hong Kong in 1940. During World War II, life was precarious, and the family sans Daddy shuttled between Hong Kong and China. Dodging the Japanese was a life-and-death matter. "My arthritis,"



Marshall and a customer

Art's mother still reminds him, "began when you and I hid in rice patties, under water, breathing through straws, to escape marauding Japanese troops".

After the War, Wai Park, ex-GI, was able to bring his wife and Art, the then youngest child, to this country; Art's three older siblings (a brother and two sisters) remained in Hong Kong.

So at age five, Art Dong, knowing not a word of English, arrived by sea in San Francisco. The family seems to have flourished almost immediately. A sewing factory was begun. Property on Jackson Street consisting of three flats and a house in back (in which Marshall and his mother still live) was purchased with a distant cousin. When the sewing operation closed, it was replaced by a grocery store (now a laundromat) at Jackson and Leavenworth.

In 1948, Marshall, the fifth child, was born. Both he and Art, as the years went by, worked in the family store while attending San Francisco public schools. By the mid-1960's, Art had "done everything", working in gas stations, in construction, even as a cook at Seattle's World Fair. He was now back in San Francisco and Marshall was at City College.

In 1967, a fateful event occurred. Marshall, looking for part-time work, heard that George Atashkarian was seeking to hire someone. George had taken over Speedy's in 1964 from Leo and Irene Wiatrack who, in turn, had bought it in 1954 from the Spediaccis, the family after whom Speedy's takes its name and who had run the store since the 1920's.

Marshall's "part-time" job soon found him at Speedy's over fifty hours a week; not a lot of time or energy was left for City College. A year later, war once again intervened in the Dong family's affairs; Marshall was drafted. Who better to take his place at Speedy's than brother

Art, then working at JC Super in the Mission? Marshall went to war, and Art arrived on Telegraph Hill (for a fictionalized glimpse of Art in his early years on the Hill, take a look at the character of Lyle Wong in Armisted Maupin's *Tales of the City*).

Two years later, Marshall was honorably discharged and, by law, could have demanded his job back at Speedy's. But Art was now married, and Marshall was still single, so Art stayed on while Marshall found work elsewhere, eventually ending up at "Princess Pat's," a grocery store owned by a Greek woman at Sacramento and Polk.

In 1978, George Atashkarian decided it was time to sell Speedy's, and Art and Marshall Dong were ready to buy it. The deal was made, and Art and Marshall took over, renting out the meat department to Bill Wong, an arrangement which lasted until the latter's death.

About this time, Marshall married; he has two children, Adam and Stephanie, and a step-daughter, Michelle. There are likewise two children of Art's marriage, a son, Craig, now a San Francisco police officer, and a daughter, Colette, a nurse.

The two brothers incorporated the store, graciously acknowledging the heritage of the Spediacci family by naming it "Speedy's Grocery, Inc. dba [doing business as] New Union Grocery". In a move of some prescience, they became union employees of their own company, thus laying the groundwork for union health and pension benefits.

After more than thirty years, it is to be expected that a routine has been established. The store is open seven days a week. Art opens it up at 8:00 a.m. and stays until after it closes, which, theoretically, is 7:00 p.m., though often later. Sundays are an exception, the hours being 10:00 to 6:00. Since Art commutes from

## Speedy's Redux *continued*

Clayton, out between Walnut Creek and Concord, this makes for one long day!

Marshall comes in between 11:00 and noon. But by then he will have shopped for produce and made other stops for purchases. And he handles all the record-keeping, which takes up two or three hours after the shop closes. Before Marshall's arrival during the week, their Mom, Ngan Ping, comes in to bridge the gap. Each brother gets every other Sunday off; this means, for each of them, working thirteen straight days without a breather!

It may come as no surprise that there is no heir-apparent in the family. Anyone who shops at Speedy's knows the store has just about everything. But it is true that, over the years, tastes have changed on the Hill. Both Art and Marshall see a shift in the demands of their customers from foodstuffs and raw ingredients to

pre-prepared foods. And the number of people has diminished as families have moved away or children have grown and left; the number of pied-a-terres has increased, too, with some properties vacant much of the time. With the advent of the "A" sticker, people who had moved off the Hill, but had parked here while working downtown and then shopped on their way home, no longer do so.

In the meanwhile, as one would expect, costs have gone up; the rent, originally \$350 per month, is now several thousand dollars. Running a corner grocery store has become high finance!

What does the future hold? Art has already reached the magic '85', the union requirement of age plus years of service needed to retire on a full pension. Marshall stands at 84, one year to go. Both Art and Marshall are keeping their options open, but we are in for a change, and no doubt sooner than any of us want.

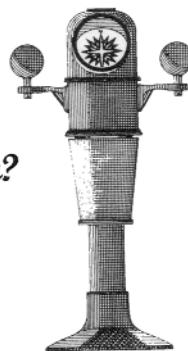
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Marshall, Mom Ngan Ping, and Art in 1986

Art and Marshall Dong are wonderful people; Speedy's without them is unimaginable. We have had the privilege, for more than thirty years now, of the company of these two men. How many places can you think of where you know the names of the guys behind the counter and they know yours? How many places which serve as an unofficial message center and drop off point? Even how many places where you don't feel too embarrassed to ask if you can use the bathroom? When I inquired of each of them (separately) what the best part of having Speedy's had been, both Art and Marshall instantly said "the people." Believe me, the people say, "That's mutual."

## Specials from Speedy's Larry Habegger:

I don't remember when I first met Marshall and Art, but I do know that very quickly after they took control of the business a stop there for a banana, a bottle of wine, or bag of rice usually meant a few uproarious laughs and a marvelous repartee. Even after all these years I almost always walk out of Speedy's happier than when I went in. Those two are still a vital social asset for the neighborhood, and I sometimes drop in on the way home even if I don't need anything just to get a dose of their good humor.

## Specials from Speedy's *continued*

### Vera Ransom:

I have lived on Telegraph Hill, off and on, since 1940. I have always shopped at New Union Grocery and am pleased that they are still there. Arthur and Marshall have continued the tradition of the Spediacci family of friendly, expert service. They further accommodate me, in my less than ambulatory status, by delivering my groceries and putting my letters in the mail box. Let's give them and New Union landmark status!

### Cheryl Bentley:

I have loved watching Art and Marshall's kids grow up. While playing outside in front of the store, the pre-school Colette used to boldly announce, "I don't like you" as I walked by. I suspect that she used this effective attention-getting ploy on other passers-by. We teased Art that his daughter had his mouth.

I recently reminded Colette, now a lovely young nurse, of her younger days. She seemed surprised that she had said such things. But I would guess she still has her dad's feistiness.

### Diana Nauman:

Art frequently gives my dog Freckles treats. Art has made a friend for life. Freckles' tail starts wagging before we even get close to Speedy's, and she insists on walking on the Speedy's side of the street. Once we are there, her eyes never leave Art.

### Peter Overmire:

The Keys. If you haven't noticed them, the next time you're waiting at the Speedy's cash register look up, and see the bunches of keys hanging on a wire. Why are they there? For many of us, it's a lot more fun to guess than to ask... Are they

the keys of customers, left on the counter at check-out time? If so, how did folks get into their homes without realizing that their keys were missing? That has the potential for some wild fantasies!

Perhaps they interfere with the magnetic field cast up by the cash register, thereby keeping the milk from souring? Or are they the keys for one of Art or Marshall's many cars? Or are they the keys for the old blue van? What's your guess?

### Susan Ariel Rainbow Kennedy:

Speedy's is a community center masquerading as a store. All of us on the hill meet there to exchange tidbits of communication while navigating the narrow aisles, stacked with surprisingly excellent merchandise. Marshall and Art are like the "crabby comedy duo" who pretend not to care, but really care deeply. They also know SO many details about all of their customers, and are actually very discreet.

Back in my "starving artist" days, they gave me a monthly account, which enabled me to buy groceries until the next sale of art or writing.

I love how cramped the store appears, yet how they always remember what I've ordered! It's fun to watch newcomers try to figure out all the mysterious codes and systems at Speedy's. Now I own property nearby, and will probably be here long after Speedy's changes into some new form.



# Volunteers Wanted and Needed

By Rhoda Feldman

**W**hether you're Rich or Poor Young or Old Man, Woman, Girl or Boy White, Black, Asian, or Other Strong or Weak Retired or Employed Bored or Busy... you're needed, often right in your own neighborhood, to volunteer to help others.

Our varied neighborhoods are blessed with many groups whose goals are to assist neighbors who have unique needs or problems (maybe not so unique) that impact, in small or sometime even terrible ways, their own lives and maybe the lives of

their children, parents, or friends.

Happy to say not all needs are related to problems. Sometimes just being a helpful guide to a senior or youth, in sports, or reading, or learning to create art, or write stories can change lives. And don't let's forget important needs within THD (see last page of this issue). Your participation will be a joy.

As starters, listed below are just a few organizations (all located within walking distance of most of us) needing a helping hand. In future editions, *The Semaphore* plans to highlight the efforts and impact of more nearby groups.

Call to find out how you can serve.

**Chinatown Community Development Center** \*(see details below) 1525 Grant Street between Union and Filbert, 984-1450

**Italian-American Community Services Agency**, 678 Green Street, 362-6423

**National Shrine of St. Francis Assisi**, 610 Vallejo Street. Contact Brother Robert, 983-0405

**North Beach Citizens** \*\*(see details below) 718 Columbus Ave. between Greenwich and Filbert, 772-0918

**Salesian Girls and Boys Club**. 680 Filbert Street. Contact, Russell. Gumina, Executive Director, 397-3068

**Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center**. 660 Lombard Street between Powell and Mason. Contact Ivana Warren, 421-6443

**The Arc San Francisco** (Association for Retarded Citizens) Bay St. near Mason, 255-7200 \*\*\* (see details below)

## Details:

\* For more than 24 years, the Chinatown Community Development Center has been a community organization with many roles, serving as neighborhood advocates committed to the empowerment of low income residents, to diversity and coalition building, and to social and economic equality in partnership with public, private and other non-profit entities. Its housing developments include 1449 units for over 2,000 residents on 19 sites. An inspiring example is the soon-to-happen ground-breaking for the International Hotel Senior Housing at

Kearny and Jackson. It will accommodate 105 units. The Tenant Service staff provides support, counseling, and advice, often resulting in advancing education, securing employment, making available health care, and solving personal issues. Wouldn't you like to be part of such a dynamic effort?

\*\* North Beach Citizens grew out of encounters that local resident Francis Ford Coppola had with several homeless people whom he would pass and chat with on his way to his office. He thought, "These people whom I meet so often deserve more than the occasional change that passers-by might give them. They merit help in having decent clothes to wear when job hunting, a place to get a letter or phone message, even a place to warm a cup of coffee." Out of such ruminations and with the cooperation of neighbors in North Beach and encouragement from his associates grew North Beach Citizens, which after several years of planning, fund raising and other acquisitions, recently opened. It already has five clients (4 men and 1 woman), and looks forward to getting the word out to more. That's where NBC needs your input and collaboration.

\*\*\* The ARC San Francisco, since 1951, has been providing developmentally disabled adults with training for employment, job placement, independent living skills, and mobility. It includes helping families meet the needs of their dependent members. A surprising aspect of activities within ARC is how the recipients enjoy the recent focus on providing training and experimenting in making art. Artists and art students are encouraged to share their talents.



## From The Supervisor's Desk

By Supervisor Aaron Peskin

Greetings friends. After less than a month on the Board of Supervisors, I still find myself adjusting to the transition from neighborhood activist to elected official. Perhaps most surreally, leaders whose doors I used to persistently knock on at City Hall now come knocking on my door!

The Board term is off to a great start. Among a variety of actions being taken is an effort to introduce greater public accountability to the planning and development process. Several of my colleagues and I have taken action towards ensuring that individuals and community groups play a more significant role in this process. Most recently, I authored amendments to the City's Administrative Code that make it easier to appeal an Environmental Impact Report to the Board of Supervisors.

On another note, I want to invite Dwellers who are interested to consider volunteering in our City Hall office. As some know, Supervisors' staff was cut from three to two employees his past November. As a result, we are counting on

## Another Pome

By John D. Dolan

There was a time—1950—when North Beach rents were thrifty and within the reach of those who chose to live a life beyond making money, although for sure, entrepreneurs provided a decided environment:

Mike's Pool Hall on Broadway served a three-bean salad.  
 Anne's 440 introduced a shy Johnny Mathis, who still sings, and Finnocchio's drag for the tourists, and for the literary purists, City Lights, whose cash register still rings up Ginsberg's HOWL and Jack Kerouac.

Back then La Bodega was The Copper Lantern (gay) and Moose's was a furniture store, and Washington Square had no lights.

Oh, the fights!  
 A garage under the park?  
 Commuters parking at will all over the Hill?  
 No limit to how high buildings could go?

Well! THD stopped some, slowed down others, and still does.  
 Well, that was and still is a place to treasure by any measure.

volunteers to answer phones, do basic constituent outreach, and to generally help around the office. Interested? Please call Rose Chung in my office. Also, please always feel free to contact us at any time with your questions, issues or concerns (554-7450). See you around the neighborhood!

# Say, Who's in Charge of *The Semaphore*?

By Patricia Cady

*Part 3: Acknowledging past Semaphore editors whose news has become the history of Telegraph Hill Dwellers.*

Pier 45 at Fisherman's Wharf was at the heart of the local fishing industry when my dad took me down to watch the boats come in with catch. We'd have bread and chowder with rowdy heirs of the young men who left their sunny seaside towns in Italy to fish San Francisco's cold bay profitably enough to construct dwellings, churches and shops in a community they called North Beach: North of what was then the built city, near a sandy beach right for wharves and docks.

I joined Telegraph Hill Dwellers when our present editor Cheryl Bentley started her first

stint as Semaphore editor (1986-89), and read with interest news that a hotel might replace the pier and overturn zoning regulations protecting the Wharf and Embarcadero from the giant developments we are bracing for today.

But fifteen years ago no one made a better case for supporting the fishing industry than Rod Freebairn-Smith, then THD's Waterfront Chair, who successfully argued to retain the pier for exclusive use of fishermen. His work helped start a citizens advisory committee, which presented a sensible land use and growth plan for the area to the City's Planning Commission, which discarded it, claiming lack of funds to pay for an environmental review. The working wharf gradually gave way to tourism, but THD continues to be on the side of genuine wharf life



Editors Cheryl Bentley, Clyde Steiner, Patricia Cady remember deadlines.

in its battle with schlok, as witnessed in the current controversy over the fate of Pier 45.

The October 1987 *Semaphore* was the 100th edition of THD's quarterly newsletter. Cheryl published a photo account of the champagne party marking official dedication of Jack Early Park, his gift to the City. For thirty years Jack dragged hoses from his Pfeiffer Street home to the aerie he landscaped across the street. (As a continuing memorial, his generous financial bequest to THD will help underwrite costs of producing an updated edition of David Myrick's definitive book, *San Francisco's Telegraph Hill*.)

**Progress:** The City approved THD's request to replace an old bulkhead at Kearny and Vallejo Streets with an open-space area. (In those days the Department of Public Works had a reputation for dotting neighborhoods with "ruins." Crews would jackhammer concrete to smithereens, then disappear for months. Every effort to get DPW to finish the job failed, until a newspaper article compared the problem with a story about civic improvements told by Franz Kafka.) THD held a party celebrating the spot's

## This 'N' That By The Ear

The **Blue Bar** in the **Black Cat** is the scene of a weekly session of jazz and poetry on Mondays, produced in part by **City Lights**. If you would like to present work, or just to listen, call 931-2233. . .

Speaking of the **Black Cat**, we have heard raves about its new French-bistro style menu. . .

Phileas Fogg has nothing on **Rozell** and **Peter Overmire**, who in the past year or so have traveled to South Africa, South America, India,

completion. Now, tourists snap photos, including of Gerry Hurtado and other nearby residents, who care for its thriving plants and trees.

The Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989 proved that structures on the flanks of this little rock mountain can sustain a good shake. Half an hour after the quake, editor Cheryl was out delivering copies of *The Semaphore*. Telegraph Hill was dark for a few days, businesses closed for lack of power. Neighbors got together to share food, grilled outdoors, and many sheltered friends whose homes in other areas were damaged or destroyed.

Because the Embarcadero Freeway was damaged by the quake, THD was one of the first organizations to advocate demolishing it. Clyde Steiner (editor 1990-94) was out taking pictures as the enormous structure was dismantled, cheered on by a few locals, still around, who had vehemently protested its construction thirty years earlier.

*Next: Clyde Steiner takes on the movie industry and Telegraph Hill becomes greener.*

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and Central America. Rozell is a whiz at attracting tigers. . .

**Mary Noyes** is in Italy working on her book about—of course—Italy! . . .

Best kept secret on the Hill is **Speedy's** potato salad. Also, **Hanna Chedyak** of **Fog Hill Market** turns out great Mideastern specialties. . .

Rumor hath that **Aaron Peskin**, our new Supe, has been putting in 20-hour-days—and loving every minute of it. . .

**Susan Weisberg** was quoted in the January 29 *Time* giving a woman-on-the-street opinion of the energy crisis. Susan has an inside track to *Time*. Her son is a stringer there. . .

# THD Board Resolutions

## November

None

## December

No Meeting

## January

The Board agreed to urge the San Francisco Planning Commission to find that the development of a paved private driveway within the public open space of Marion Place on Russian Hill not in accord with the Public Plan.

### Classified Ads

Did you know *The Semaphore* takes classified ads? Our rates are \$20 for a 4-line and \$30 for 5 to 7 lines. Call 956-0939 to place an ad.



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# THD Welcomes New Members

## New THD Members, November 2000 to January 2001

Catherine Accardi, Alison Becker, Hillary & Eric Bell, Richard & Katherine Bishop, Jeffery Chinn, Frances & Dean Corbitt, Stephanie Greenberg & Darrin Swan, John Lee, Andy Chen & Lilly Lu, Tim Keller, Richard Levine &

Elisabeth Cholnoky, Elizabeth Malloy, Gary Obligacion, Babette & Steven Pinsky, Laurel Rest & Bill Kedem, Ren & Anita Reynolds, Trudy Sachs, Martha Schmidt, Norma & Ernest Tealdi

***For a Voice in Your Neighborhood Join Telegraph Hill Dwellers.***

## NEW MEMBER INFORMATION

Sign Up or Sign a Friend Up as a member of Telegraph Hill Dwellers.

Complete and mail to THD, PO Box 330159, SF, CA 94133

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK ENCLOSED FOR 1-YEAR MEMBERSHIP

Single \$25  Family \$40  Senior \$15

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*Danielle Chavanon*

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*Ginger Martin*

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# THD COMMITTEES NEED YOU

You can make a difference! Join one of THD's committees, meet and work with your fellow Hill Dwellers to improve life on the Hill.

## STANDING COMMITTEES

### **Parking and Transportation.**

Chair, Howard Wong, 982-5055. Promotes efforts to ease congestion, optimize white zones, upgrade public transportation. Works with Department of Parking and Traffic.

### **Planning and Zoning**

Chair Nancy Shanahan, 986-7094. Monitors and reviews proposed development projects for consistency with applicable City ordinances. Works with Planning Department staff and represents THD before the Landmarks Board, Planning Commission, Zoning Administrator and other regulating bodies to protect historic resources and maintain neighborhood character. Assists members to learn more about and participate in planning and zoning issues.

**Semaphore.** Editor Cheryl Bentley, 392-4081. The editor and staff produce a quarterly magazine for THD members.

**Program.** Chair Pat Swan, 788-7926. Arranges social events, including quarterly membership meetings and get-acquainted social functions.

**Budget.** Maya Armour, 986-1474. As prescribed in bylaws for Treasurer.

### **Membership.**

Chair Rozell Overmire, 989-3945. As prescribed in bylaws for Financial Secretary.

## SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND PROJECTS

### **Parks and Trees.**

Chair Julie Christensen, 552-7774. email julie@surfaces.com. Information and projects concerning local parks, green spaces and street trees.

### **Neighborhood Beautification**

Jan Holloway, 398-2055. Creates opportunities to improve, beautify, and preserve the Hill. Through its awards program, recognizes individuals and businesses who enhance our neighborhood. Facilitates cleanup, gardening and graffiti removal.

### **Oral History Project**

Chair Audrey Tomaselli, 391-1792. Taped interviews provide historical documentation of living and working in the neighborhood.

### **Pioneer Park Improvement**

Project. Chair Howard Wong, 982-5055. Work party volunteers enhance the open space around Coit Tower, improving accessibility and safety through planning, landscaping work parties and fundraising.

### **THD Web Page.**

Webmaster Peter Overmire, 989-3945. Shared information about meetings, local concerns and events.

## LIAISONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

### **Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods.**

Representative Gerry Crowley, 781-4201. City-wide organization interacts with other neighborhoods to discuss common problems.

### **N.E.R.T.**

June Fraps, 392-1187. Energizes members to take emergency disaster response training program sponsored by the City.

## WEB SITE = [www.thd.org](http://www.thd.org)

That's Us! Pete Overmire (989-3945), a longtime THDer and former officer has set up this site for Telegraph Hill Dwellers. Access it to see the sensational look he has created, impressive to local and international browsers alike. Lend him photographs and graphics relevant to the Hill that he can scan in. Call or e-mail information about upcoming meetings in the neighborhood and at City agencies, and ideas and concerns you want the rest of us to know about between Semaphores.

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**T H D C A L E N D A R**

**2nd Saturday Stair & Garden Work Parties**, March 10, April 14, May 12, June 9. Meet at Pioneer Park. For more information call 552-7774.

**Annual Membership Dinner**, Monday, April 2, Italian Athletic Club. Time to be announced.

**2nd Annual Oysters and Beer Fest**, Saturday, March 31, 11-6:00. Families welcome. Sponsored by O'Reilly's.

**Schedules of Committee Meetings**

**PLANNING & ZONING**: Last Wednesdays. Call for time and location. 986-7070.

**PARKING & TRANSPORTATION**: 2nd Saturdays at 11 AM at Little City Restaurant, Union and Powell Streets.

**For more information, log on to**  
**<http://www.thd.org>**

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